

Christian Nationalism: Part 1
The Christian Faith and Contemporary Challenges
June 13, 2021

“My kingdom is not of this world.” – John 18:36

I. Introduction: What is “Christian Nationalism”?

A. Any application of Scriptural teaching to Christian civic engagement?

1. **1 Cor 10:31** – *“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”*
2. **2 Pet 2:13** – *“Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme,¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.”*
3. **Rom 13:1** – *“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”*
4. **1 Tim 2:1–2** – *“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people,² for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.”*

B. Any call for religion (esp. Christian religion) to have a role in American public life?

1. *“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable.... Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”*
– George Washington (Farewell Address)
2. *“We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”*
– John Adams

C. BEST = The misguided use of religion (especially Christianity) to advance a political cause, particularly by identifying the heavenly Kingdom of Christ with an earthly political vision for America.

1. Examples

- a) The “Millenarianism” (period of future earthly blessing, based on Rev 20:4) of some 17th century Puritans and even Spanish pre-Reformation Catholics.

“God made me the messenger of the new heaven and the new earth, of which He spoke in the Apocalypse by St. John, after having spoken of it by the mouth of Isaiah; and He showed me the spot where to find it.” – Christopher Columbus

- b) Yard Sign: “Make Faith Great Again: Trump 2020”

- c) The Syncretism of the “Jericho March” on Washington (December 2020)

II. A Redemptive-Historical Case Against “Christian Nationalism” (not Patriotism)

Theocracy (defined acc. to Scripture): *A geo-political realm whose inhabitants and land are consecrated to God by virtue of God’s having established his royal residence in it.*

“Theocracy implies an external realm. It does not refer to a spiritual reign of God in the hearts of his people by itself, but includes the geopolitical dimension ... It denotes a particular kingdom realm that God claims in a special way as his own.” – Meredith G. Kline

A. Theocracy #1 – EDEN

1. **Gen 2:10, 12** – *“A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden ... And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.”*
2. **Ezek 28:13** – *“You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings.”*
3. **Gen 3:23** – *“...therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken ...”*

B. Theocracy #2 – CANAAN/ISRAEL

1. **Num 35:34** – *“You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell, for I the Lord dwell in the midst of the people of Israel” (Num 35:34)*
2. **Deut 26:15** – *“Look down from your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless your people Israel and the ground that you have given us, as you swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.”*
3. **Ps 101:8** – *“Morning by morning I will destroy all the wicked in the land, cutting off all the evildoers from the city of the Lord.”*
 - a) By contrast, we live as wilderness pilgrims, seeking our heavenly home, during a period of the delay of God’s final judgment!
 - i. **Heb 11:13–16** – *“These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.”*
 - ii. **2 Pet 3:7** – *“But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.”*

C. Theocracy #3 – THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

1. **2 Pet 3:13** – *“But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”*
2. **Rev 6:10–11** – *“When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.”¹⁰ They cried out with a loud voice, ‘O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’¹¹ Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.”*
3. **Rev 7:17** – *“For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”*

III. Conclusion

- A. Christians should be diligent to frame all of their lives (including their civic engagement!) by the light of God’s Word.
- B. BUT ... Christians should recognize that Scripture prescribes neither a definite form of government (e.g., democratic republic vs. monarchy vs. parliamentary system) nor a precise political platform. So Christians can and should exercise charity on matters of conscience.
- C. Because America is not a biblical theocracy, but a wonderful, yet fallen, nation state (which God has blessed with much common grace!), we should not equate it with the eternal Kingdom of Christ.
- D. Implications?

“[I]n scrambling for political privilege, the church loses confidence in the Spirit’s power working through this gospel and communicates to the world that it requires worldly supports for its success.”

– Michael Horton